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Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 4 October 2016

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 4 octobre 2016

Standing Committee on Government Agencies

Intended appointments

Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Nominations prévues



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Tuesday 4 October 2016

Mardi 4 octobre 2016

The committee met at 0901 in committee room 2.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Good morning, committee members. Welcome to a fun-filled day in government agencies. I hope you're all well.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Before we begin our intended appointments review for today, the first order of business to consider is a subcommittee report that is dated Thursday, September 29, 2016. Would someone please like to move adoption of this report? Mr. Gates.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Good morning. I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, September 29, 2016.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Committee members, is there any discussion on this report? Are we all in favour? Anyone opposed? No? The motion is carried.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

MS. MARGARET REYNOLDS

Review of intended appointment, selected by third party: Margaret Reynolds, intended appointee as member, Landlord and Tenant Board (Social Justice Tribunals Ontario).

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): We now move to appointments review. We have two intended appointees to hear from today. We're going to consider concurrences following the interviews.

Our first intended appointee today is Margaret Reynolds. I would ask you to come forward. Margaret, you are being considered for the Landlord and Tenant Board.

Ms. Margaret Reynolds: That's correct.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Please have a seat. Margaret, you're going to have 10 minutes to speak to us, and that will be followed by questions by our members who are here today. Please begin anytime.

Ms. Margaret Reynolds: Thank you for having me today.

My name is Margaret Reynolds. I'm currently a member of the Social Benefits Tribunal. I live in North Bay, Ontario.

I feel very fortunate to be here today with the opportunity to continue to serve the great province of Ontario in the capacity as a member of the Landlord and Tenant Board. I would like to highlight some of the qualifications which I hope to bring to this position, if appointed. I believe I bring a mixture of experience, training and knowledge to this prospective appointment.

For more than 13 years now, I have served both at the federal and provincial levels as a member of a quasi-judicial tribunal. I began my tribunal career just over 13 years ago with the board of referees. This federal tribunal dealt with matters concerning the employment act of Canada. I served as a side member and considered various aspects of that statute, including eligibility and quantum of employment insurance coverage for workers who had lost their jobs. This experience was multi-faceted. For example, the tribunal would routinely consider whether or not an individual had been dismissed for cause or not. Their eligibility for employment insurance hung in the balance. These were important matters.

After I completed three years of service at the federal tribunal level, I was appointed to the Social Benefits Tribunal of Ontario in April 2006. I have been a member of that tribunal continuously since that time. As you know, this tribunal considers matters dealing with the Ontario Disability Support Program and Ontario Works. Eighty per cent of the volume of my work at this tribunal dealt with eligibility for ODSP benefits. The adjudication of these matters is both difficult and sensitive.

I have learned a great many things in the discharge of these responsibilities. I've listened carefully to some of the most vulnerable citizens who have been suffering with physical and mental impairments. I have adjudicated matters dealing with financial calculations of benefit entitlements. I can bring in knowledge of procedural aspects and board processes, how they work, and carry this over into the Landlord and Tenant Board. I've been working with legislation and honing my writing skills over 10 years. I have the ability to actively listen to people, and I bring a respect for diversity and sensitivity to the disadvantages that people may have with disabilities, including mental health issues and language issues. All of these experiences, I believe, put me in good stead to properly and competently discharge my duties as a member of the Landlord and Tenant Board.

I have been able to carry a heavy load and I have been able to discharge my obligations on time and in both official languages.

Je suis très fière de servir la population de l'Ontario dans les deux langues officielles.

I have been a landlord to no less than 10 tenants in various buildings that I've owned.

I believe that I can bring to this position the right sensitivities to balance the rights and obligations of both landlords and tenants. I volunteered in the community in various endeavours, including writing a weekly newspaper article describing career opportunities in the community, and I've served on the board of directors of a community volunteer centre.

However, the thing that I am proudest of is the 11 years that I spent as a stay-at-home mother, raising my three children, who are now successful adults, one of whom is an officer in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Thank you for allowing me to make these brief submissions. I look forward to answering any questions.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Thank you very much, Margaret. Our first line of questioning for you is going to come from the government side. Do we have any questions?

Mr. Mike Colle: If I could just comment: I sense in your presentation that you're a very capable and a very sensitive person who has already spent years of service with the federal government and at the provincial level. I just hope that you can continue to bring that sensitivity, if you get appointed, to this Landlord and Tenant Board, because there are some very challenging cases of all descriptions. Given the housing realities that exist, I hope you can bring those sensitivities forward to help people ensure they get a fair hearing.

Ms. Margaret Reynolds: I believe I can. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): We now turn to the official opposition.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Good morning.

Ms. Margaret Reynolds: Good morning.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I believe one of the last things you said was that you are a landlord now.

Ms. Margaret Reynolds: Not now. I have been in the past.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I see.

The board spends a lot of time on eviction notices. There are many ways to stall hearings, allowing tenants to live rent-free for months. Other provinces have managed to get this process down to two or three weeks. Ontario averages three months, so there's quite a spread there. Would you have changes to the procedures in mind so that you could get this time frame whittled down?

Ms. Margaret Reynolds: You're speaking of the Landlord and Tenant Board?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'm sorry?

Ms. Margaret Reynolds: You're speaking with respect to the time for evictions.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Yes. It takes a long time to get these things done.

Ms. Margaret Reynolds: We've seen these two cases that have been in the media just recently. I haven't worked with the board yet. I think maybe disclosure in the process may be a way of reducing that and preventing

and maybe frustrating the process from going forward—bringing in some sort of process of disclosure before people come before the board. I think that's one of the ways, to my understanding, that things can be stalled.

0910

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I've spoken with different landlords, people in old houses—I come from a rural riding, and there are a lot of houses in the country that are rented out to tenants. Evictions generally come after they trash the place, in some cases, or a non-payment of rent. It seems to take a long time to get these people out, and it costs a lot of money. There are usually lawyers involved, and certainly boards involved and whatever else.

That's why I'm asking this question. Would you have any ideas, other than what you've just said, for ways of streamlining this process? It seems that if there is a certain wrong being done here, it should be cleared up.

Ms. Margaret Reynolds: You're saying "a certain wrong"?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: The wrong is trashing a house, and these things are difficult to get these people to either pay for it or get them out. That's what some landlords are facing, certainly. That's why I'm asking this question, if you have any ideas. You've been a landlord at one time. Maybe you didn't have any bad experiences.

Ms. Margaret Reynolds: No.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: But certainly there are those out there. The board has spent a lot of time on eviction notices.

Ms. Margaret Reynolds: Given that I haven't really worked with the board yet, I haven't had time to really analyze those problems. I think that I would need some time with the board before I could really properly present some ideas, perhaps.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Would you consider a registry of tenants that possibly have issues, or have had issues? Would that be something that would interest you?

Ms. Margaret Reynolds: I think we have to consider privacy issues and legalities. I think there is a responsibility for landlords to do due diligence with their tenants, to really investigate and ask those questions when a possible tenant comes in. Again, I don't know that I can answer that question.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Okay. I would think that if you're going to apply for a board like this, maybe there should be some knowledge of the way things work here.

Ms. Margaret Reynolds: I think those kinds of things, those kinds of decisions, are done with discussion and study—discussions with stakeholders. I can certainly participate in that if and when I'm part of the board. But again, those decisions are going to be made on a higher level. At this point, again, I haven't worked with the board, so I'd want to do that first.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Yes, MPP Cho?

Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: I'm a new MPP. I just got elected months ago, so I have much to learn, but I have a question. When I was driving this morning, I heard over the radio on the CBC that we have more poor

children in Toronto than in any other parts of Ontario. One out of four children is under the poverty line.

So as a hypothetical—but it could really happen too—say, you have a tenant, a single mom and five children, and got the eviction notice. How would you handle that? Will you just do that following the rules, or will you recommend that there are some exceptional cases and the family should be dealt with differently because of poor children and all that?

Ms. Margaret Reynolds: I have to make a decision within the law, but certainly I can look at the case and really canvass to find out what's going on with the people, what their situation is, and look at them in the context of what's happening. There is mediation at this board to bring the parties together, possibly to get some kind of reconciliation outside of maybe a hearing. If that can't be reached, then to again canvass them and try to help them to maybe set out a payment plan—not just turf them out on the street but to work towards some kind of plan so that they're not just, as I say, turfed out on the street. I guess that's the best way I can answer that question.

Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Okay. You answered “within the law,” but everything changes. Society changes so quickly, and if the law is too old, would you make a recommendation that the law itself should be changed?

Ms. Margaret Reynolds: I would. I would certainly do that, but I would do it when I have more experience with the board so that I understand the different things that are going on and the issues that are at hand. That's what I would do. Certainly, I would have those discussions.

Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Okay. Fine.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Thank you very much, MPP Cho. Our final questions for you now are from MPP Gates.

Mr. Wayne Gates: How are you this morning?

Ms. Margaret Reynolds: I'm very well. Thank you.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Good. I just want to get some clarification because, from what I read—maybe I'll read this out to you and you can let me know when your situation changed.

In your application to the Public Appointments Secretariat, under the “additional information” section, you listed that you are, “Landlord to over 12 residential leases. Tenant to over six residential leases.” Could you clarify that for me? Obviously, how you've answered the other parties is different than what was provided to us.

Ms. Margaret Reynolds: Oh, I didn't know that, unless the—no, I'm not a landlord. I haven't been a landlord for a long time. What we did was, when we purchased our first house, we had an apartment in the house and we were renting it out at that time, and when we moved, we had another apartment in the house. We kept our first house and rented that out as two units as well as the house we continue to live in.

In the house that we're in now, once our children became teenagers, we took over that space, and that was

10 years ago. We took over the space, so I haven't been a landlord since that time.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I can tell you that the information that I read is certainly a little different. It talked about 12 units, renting to six different properties. Obviously, the information that was provided to me was not the same as what I'm hearing this morning, which is fine, but I think it's fair and reasonable for me to ask you about it.

While you were renting, did you ever have any bad experiences?

Ms. Margaret Reynolds: Sorry. I don't understand where that information—

Mr. Wayne Gates: I don't know either. I just read it; I didn't write it.

Ms. Margaret Reynolds: Okay.

Mr. Wayne Gates: So I put it in my question. I was a little concerned about that.

Ms. Margaret Reynolds: Thank you for your question.

We were very fortunate. We had very good experiences. We had a number of tenants come through over the years. We certainly did our due diligence when we were looking for tenants. Many of the tenants came to us by word of mouth, so we were fortunate in that respect.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I want to go on record with my colleagues that this is probably an issue that we all deal with quite regularly in our offices, that renters are people and families as well. I think there are good landlords, quite frankly, but there's also bad landlords, just like there's bad renters. I don't think it's one-sided at all. That's why we have some of the problems we do.

The Landlord and Tenant Board has come under fire from both landlords and tenants at various times for, among other issues, taking too long to rule on eviction requests, never rejecting applications for above-guideline increases and more. What would you say is the biggest challenge facing the board, and how would you seek to address that issue?

0920

Ms. Margaret Reynolds: Again, I haven't worked with the board yet. I know there's been a lot of talk about the imbalance between the landlord and the tenant and how the legislation seems to favour the tenant more than the landlord. It may be that that's one of the bigger challenges, to maybe bring in policies to help with any frustration with the legal process that the landlord may have now.

There's also the backlog. There's a backlog, too. Technology, I think, is helping now with these backlogs that we're seeing. I know at the Social Benefits Tribunal, we've just recently gone to an electronic filing system. We do many hearings now by teleconference as well as by laptop. These kinds of things also help with speeding up the process. That's what I've found.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I listened to our new MPP who just got elected, and he talked about poverty in Toronto. Obviously, one of the things that is very concerning to everybody is poverty rates across the province of Ontario, when young kids are going to bed hungry. And

it is a very tough job to evict somebody out of their apartment, their living space, particularly when it's a single mom, a single dad, whatever the issue is.

I've noticed in your past experience, you've dealt with some interesting boards, including EI, where people are being dismissed for cause or not for cause; so you've faced some of those challenges over the course of your working life. They're never easy, quite frankly, and dealing with the situations where a renter or a landlord is having some difficulties with that relationship is never easy. But we certainly need a board that can get that resolution done quickly. That's not happening today. Hopefully, if you get on board, you could take a serious look at that.

Ms. Margaret Reynolds: I will.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Because that is a problem, the length of time to fix it.

I'm just going to ask you one more question. I think it's a fair question; it's one that I started asking maybe six months ago to individuals, because I think it's important to get it on record.

According to Elections Ontario records, you've contributed nearly \$1,500 to the Liberal Party of Ontario over the last two years. Part of your role as a member of the Landlord and Tenant Board will be to act as an impartial and non-partisan judge of facts that are put in front of you. Given your past donation records, are you now prepared to ensure that all of your actions as a member of the board are not only, but also appear to be, fully non-partisan?

Ms. Margaret Reynolds: I am.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Okay. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Thank you very much, MPP Gates. That concludes the allocated time for this interview.

Thank you very much, Margaret Reynolds. You may step down. A decision on your appointment will be made in approximately one half-hour.

Ms. Margaret Reynolds: Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): You're welcome.

MS. WENDY NICKLIN

Review of intended appointment, selected by third party: Wendy Nicklin, intended appointee as member, Champlain Local Health Integration Network.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Our next intended appointee today is Wendy Nicklin. I would ask that you come forward, Wendy, and have a seat. Welcome, and thank you very much for being here today.

You may begin with a brief statement if you wish. Members of each party are going to then have 10 minutes to ask you questions. Any time from your statement that you use will be deducted from the government's time for questions. Begin anytime.

Ms. Wendy Nicklin: Thank you. It's a pleasure to be here, Madam Chair and members of the committee. I

appreciate your time and I appreciate the important role that you play.

It is a privilege for me to speak with you. I'll give you a brief summary about myself, how I got to where I am and my interest in being a board member of the Champlain LHIN. I'm assuming you've read my background and have some idea of what I bring to the table, but in a brief summary: My background is in nursing. My alma mater is McGill University. My career path took me from clinical nursing to emergency, critical care, cardiac and so on. I went through academia; I taught at Queen's University for a while and then probably spent most of my administrative time with the Ottawa Hospital in Ottawa through various senior administrative roles with Dr. Jack Kitts.

My focus has always been that of contributing to improving the quality of care—that's why we're here; that's why I'm here—and how we can improve quality of care. Whether I'm caring for an individual patient, an individual family or the population, the goal is to improve the quality of care for you and I when we're required to be there.

I was honoured to be selected in 2000 to be a member of the National Steering Committee on Patient Safety, and thus, I was a founding board member of the CPSI board. I was on that board for eight years, two as chair and two as past chair, and my focus has continued to be that of improving quality of care.

During this time as well, and following, I was on a number of other boards. The Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, ICES, which most of you are aware of—I've been on the ICES board; the Algonquin College board; and Accreditation Canada, where I was CEO—I was actually on the board many years prior to that. I gradually became increasingly involved in national and international health-related activities.

In 2004, I was selected president and CEO of Accreditation Canada, and thus my focus on contributing to improving quality of care became nationwide and also international. I believe Accreditation Canada has made and continues to make a substantial impact on quality of care. I believe I really took the program up a notch during my time there. If any of you enter into a health care facility, I urge you to look for the certificate that says "Accredited by Accreditation Canada." Whether it's long-term care, home care, CCAC, SickKids, UHN, we do have a major contribution to make there.

I strongly believe in collaboration and networking. None of us can do things alone.

In about 2005, I convened the first meeting of the health quality councils across the country as well as the Health Council of Canada existing at that time. We began to share: What do we do in a similar way; where are we complementary; how can we grow; and how can we build on each other's strengths? Although the Health Council of Canada, as you know, is no longer with us, as more health quality councils have developed, that group has continued to meet twice a year, and I am proud of that.

During this time as well, I became active with the International Society for Quality in Health Care. I won't

take time on that—I could go on—but I’m currently vice-chair of the board of the International Society for Quality in Health Care, which is headquartered in Dublin. Most of the activity is by teleconference because we have people from Ireland and the Middle East etc. who are involved, so most of the work is by teleconference. I have the privilege of being actively involved in an organization that publishes an incredible journal that enables networking of academics and researchers and gives me exposure to what is happening in health care worldwide. What we will find is that our issues are very similar to issues other countries are experiencing, so I’m blessed to have that international experience as well.

Why am I here? When I stepped down as president and CEO of Accreditation Canada in December, it was really time to look carefully. I had grown up in Ottawa. My roots are in Ottawa and my commitment is certainly to Ottawa. When I look around, and I have my international and national experience, it’s really time to come home and say, “How can I contribute to the Ottawa community and the population that serves the Ottawa region?”

I believe I have a lot to offer. My governance experience, as you know, is extensive, and I do believe putting that governance experience together, plus a different perspective that I may be able to bring than some of the other Champlain LHIN members—a complementary perspective—will be helpful.

It’s a personal and professional experience. As I leave here today, I’m flying back to Ottawa and, at 2:30, my mother and I—she’s 97—have an appointment with the case manager of the CCAC to reassess my mom and where things are going with her. So the reality of receiving and participating in health care, but, as well, looking at it strategically and what we can do for the population is where my head is at right now.

0930

I appreciate the key role of the LHINs, being to plan, fund and integrate. A lot of progress has been made, but we have a ways to go. I would look forward to being part of that.

Some challenges facing LHINs at this time:

I think that you and I know well that the next step with the CCACs is going to be a significant challenge, to assume that responsibility and the new structure and what structure that might take.

Medically assisted dying is an issue front and centre for all of us.

The increase in the proportion of seniors and the chronic disease that goes with that is also major, and the Champlain LHIN has made some excellent progress in that area.

Funding and economic pressures: I’ll say right now that the system does not need more money. There’s enough money in the health care system. The issue is how it is allocated, how it is used, how it is distributed and improving that.

The alternative-level-of-care issue: Many of you have seniors or friends who have been in an acute care

organization. Sometimes they remain there longer than they should be, and it’s not the right place for them. That’s a challenge that we continue to grapple with—and, of course, optimising partnerships.

Just briefly, my motivation is very deep. I’m very keen to contribute and be able to listen. I believe I’m at a strategic level and objective. Having been a bit out of the local scene, even though I live there, I think that given the focus of my role over the past number of years, I can bring a certain degree of objectivity as well to the scene and in my commitment to the Ottawa-Champlain area. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Thank you very much. Our first line of questioning for you begins with the official opposition. MPP Pettapiece?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Good morning. The Auditor General reported that the Champlain area has some of the highest wait times to get into long-term care, with individuals waiting for years for a bed. But the LHIN’s position on this is that the area exceeds the number of beds that it needs and that there are no plans for any new beds.

Do you believe that it’s acceptable that individuals get placed in long-term-care beds away from their family?

Ms. Wendy Nicklin: They should be in a location that is as close as possible to where they live. There’s no doubt about it. I think the challenge is how you keep the flow of the patient—where the patient is positioned—and that they’re in an organization that can provide them the care they require. Ideally, they should be as close to family as possible.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: The LHIN says they have enough beds; this is not the reality, I guess what I’m saying. Have you heard that?

Ms. Wendy Nicklin: Well, I think the issue is distribution and how that works. I’ll be candid with you: I have not gotten into the detail of that particular issue, so I’d best not venture into a comment until I have more information, but it would be something—that whole ALC issue is certainly one of concern to me. I would look forward to participating in discussions about where that’s going.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: There are doctor shortages, certainly, in the Champlain area or in the Champlain catchment. Are you aware of the doctor shortages that the Champlain LHIN is dealing with?

Ms. Wendy Nicklin: I think some of them are specialty-oriented. However, I think there are other ways, when there are shortages, as to how you actually deal with that. Using nurse practitioners and generally other types of clinics, you can actually meet the needs of those shortages, depending on specifically where they are. Again, the details of that, I do not have in the information I looked at.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Would you have any thoughts on what the most pressing health care issues are in the Champlain area?

Ms. Wendy Nicklin: Well, there are a number of them. I know that falls are an issue which has continued

to plague the area. We have a very high percentage of seniors who are hospitalized due to falls. That is a problem, and it's a challenge for all of us—how you get control of that. There is a good regional falls prevention program in place. You'll never eliminate falls; the question is how you can control them and minimize the severity. I think falls are certainly there.

There are issues within stroke care. While we're doing a great job for access for stroke care, at the same time, the issue of in-patient rehab, I know, is a challenge and improvement can be made there.

There are a number—I think of hospice palliative care. There has been some great progress made in the Champlain LHIN, but there's more work to do. Another facility is being built at this time.

Certainly, the economic pressures are there. How do you balance the needs of the many organizations that are under your purview and yet ensure fairness and equity?

Access continues to be an issue. I know the MRI issue is on the surface. A concern I have about MRIs is, fundamentally, is the MRI needed in the first place? I don't mean the machine; I mean the test. So when someone orders an MRI for you or me, is that the appropriate test or not? Are we confident that everyone on the waiting list requires an MRI, and is there that appropriateness procedure in place to make sure that who is on the list needs that, or is there a better—CT scan, X-ray, whatever? We have not tackled the appropriateness issue in many aspects of health care yet. I think we're getting there.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: You mentioned hospices. Is that an issue? You say they are building more, putting more buildings up or looking after that out there.

Ms. Wendy Nicklin: That's correct. It's been funded. There has been major fundraising going on, and in particular in the west end of the city, there is another hospice going up right now. There's a very, very active volunteer group in the city that is determined to get that in place, and a very well-coordinated regional program.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Where I come from—the city of Stratford, which is my riding, has really been at it, and groups around Ontario are certainly working on this type of thing for hospice care.

Ms. Wendy Nicklin: Yes, I believe we were one of the first with the regional program.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Okay. There is a very high French-speaking population in your area, so a question: I understand you don't speak French. Is that correct?

M^{me} Wendy Nicklin: Oui, je parle un petit peu de français—un petit peu.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I think I understood that. Anyway, you don't think this is going to be an issue at all?

Ms. Wendy Nicklin: I think it's always something to focus on. I attended the Champlain LHIN board meeting last week as an observer and there was a presentation by the French services committee chair. I think there is always a determined effort to say, "Where can we do better?"

We know at the west end of the city, there is less access to francophone services, French services, than there is in the centre and east. But the Champlain LHIN has a very good overview of where the pockets are, where they need to focus and where the services are required. This committee meets regularly. It's absolutely something—because one in five in that particular LHIN area require their services in French. So it is a high priority; no question.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Okay. Thank you.

Did you have a question?

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Yes, MPP Cho.

Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Thank you so much for coming out and applying for this position. I understand this position is part-time. I should have asked this earlier, but how many days are you going to work if you get this job?

Ms. Wendy Nicklin: Well, it's a very good question. I did meet with J.P. Boisclair, the current chair, to get a feel for what that would be about. I think the estimate would be a few days a month, but it is going to vary depending on committee involvement, retreats and other things going on.

I am in a position of quite a bit of flexibility, given the fact that I stepped down from my CEO position in December and my other responsibilities are quite flexible. I've looked ahead at the meeting dates, if I'm so appointed, and I can manage them.

That's approximately what the time frame looks like. However, I'm open to whatever those commitments are.

Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: You're applying to this position with the Champlain Local Health Integration Network. Could you tell me your understanding—what kind of research did you do for this big organization?

Ms. Wendy Nicklin: Well, quite a bit. I already knew quite a bit because of my role at the Ottawa Hospital and my 28 years there. However, I really looked carefully at the LHIN itself, what its boundaries were. Much of my preparation began when I actually applied for this position. I thought that if I'm going to apply for this position, I'd better know what I'm applying for. So I began my research last December and looked at what is the expanse, what are their key issues, what are the responsibilities, what's under their purview and what's not, and what is the nature of it to help me ensure that my motivation and contribution were in line with that organization, and that the fit and complementarity would be appropriate.

I certainly looked carefully at what the LHIN did. I also looked carefully and I've been tracking what's been going on in the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the priorities that are central with the provincial government, which is so important. The government, working closely with the LHIN as well as the other partners in health care, is part of that. I've been looking very closely at information. As I say, attending the Champlain LHIN board meeting last week was also very helpful to further inform me.

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Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Once you get this job, what kind of changes would you like to bring, what kind of contribution would you like to make to make the LHIN better?

Ms. Wendy Nicklin: Good question. First of all, my contribution needs to be in line with the integrated service plan of the LHIN and the province. My contribution is to be a valued member of the board, bringing complementary knowledge and skills to enable the Champlain LHIN to meet its strategic directions in concert with our government here so that we are addressing the population needs as well.

I believe a good part of my strength is in governance. I believe I have strong governance skills. Right now, I'm taking the Rotman ICD course, the Institute of Corporate Directors course. I've completed three of four modules. I complete the fourth module in November, and by February I'll have my ICD.D certification.

I take governance very seriously, being sure that what your role is and living that well, and then working in partnership with those around the table. None of us do it alone. I'm not there for my agenda. I'm really there to contribute to improving quality care for the population, in line with the plans as developed within the LHIN and with the government.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Thank you very much. Our final—or rather, our next line of questioning for you is from the third party, from MPP Gates.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Or “final”; whatever you want to use is fine with me.

I took a look at your qualifications. They are certainly very impressive, so I will start by saying that for sure.

You said something that always piques my interest because I've been saying this for a long time: that you believe there is enough money in health care. I've always said that. You used some words, “optimize” and “partnership,” which always concerns me, around the privatization of health care in a publicly funded system, but I'm of the same mindset as you: that the money is there. It's choices: how we spend the money and how it's allocated.

One of the things I've always said is that with the LHINs and the CCACs the pie is only so big. In each level of that pie is, something is being taken off the top and then at the end of the day you end up with less money for front-line workers, which I really believe has caused a lot of the problems.

The second thing I'm going to say before I really get into my questions is: Congratulations. You still have your mom at 97, so I'm sure you played an important role—

Ms. Wendy Nicklin: She walks; she talks; she has no hearing aid.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Well, that's great, but I'm sure you played a role in that because it is nice when we have our parents at that age.

Ms. Wendy Nicklin: Thank you.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm glad you're taking good care of your mom. It's always nice to see.

The area that falls under the Champlain LHIN has a significantly higher proportion of francophones, which was mentioned, than the rest of the province. It's 19%, compared to 4.4%. As a result, a francophone Community Engagement Framework was established by the LHIN in 2012. I'm wondering what you think of the Community Engagement Framework. Do you believe it goes far enough to ensure that francophone Ontarians are able to access all the services available to them without difficulty?

Ms. Wendy Nicklin: Good question. I think the Community Engagement Framework is excellent and is very competently managed with, as I say, a committee within the LHIN itself that's continually reviewing how we're doing and what is needed. At the meeting I attended, you could see the distribution of where we're doing well, where we're not doing well, and where we must focus. There is a very strong commitment to continue to improve. Is it where it should be? No, but I think the commitment to move it forward in the right direction is there. Again, I don't have the details as to what perhaps has been contemplated, but I think very much there is a commitment by the Champlain LHIN that we will get to that and we will continue to work to improve it, fully supported by the board.

Mr. Wayne Gates: And with you being in that, you understand the importance of making sure that francophones are taken care of in that community?

Ms. Wendy Nicklin: Absolutely.

Mr. Wayne Gates: It's a little off the subject, but are you an Ottawa Senators fan or a Montreal Canadiens fan?

Ms. Wendy Nicklin: Go, Sens go!

Mr. Wayne Gates: Okay. I just thought I'd throw that in because the francophone—

Ms. Wendy Nicklin: I'm a Blue Jays fan right now, though.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I think we all are Blue Jays fans.

This is something that goes back to what you said, quite frankly, and what I agree with you on: around money. In September last year, it was reported by the Office of the Auditor General that the CEO of the Champlain CCAC, who has since been replaced, was earning the highest salary of anyone in any CCAC across the province, and had also recorded the highest salary increases since 2009. I believe it was like 77%.

Do you believe that is an effective use of limited resources, for a CCAC CEO to be paid that much? Do you believe that that money—again, in line with what we talked about—would be better spent elsewhere?

Ms. Wendy Nicklin: I think that I'm going to give a political response here and dance around it a bit. I think we have to make judicious use of the money that we have. I think it's very important for those in CEO positions to be paid accordingly, because to hire the good people to do the good work, you have to pay accordingly and fairly.

I do not know what the other—as I said, I'm avoiding this a bit—CCAC CEOs were paid. That was Gilles Lanteigne. I did see that particular salary and it got quite

the headline in the Ottawa Citizen, no question about it, particularly with the all the other problems that were going on. This is the public's money. I think we must be responsible in how we use the public's money and be very aware that it's in line with what's appropriate, and that an organization at the board can speak to that with their head held high and say, "What we did was right and for these reasons."

As I say, I don't have further background, but I do recall the fuss—

Mr. Wayne Gates: I appreciate your political answer. I'll respond to it just quickly. It was a 72% increase. He was paid \$314,991. Now, when I look at that—because I agree with you: to get good-quality people, sometimes you've got to pay. But either he's overpaid, or the Premier of Ontario is underpaid. I'm not sure where you'd fall on that in a political answer, but I thought I'd raise that.

How much time do I have left?

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): You have approximately four and a half minutes.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Oh, we've got lots of time. We can chat. Are you okay with that?

Ms. Wendy Nicklin: I'm good.

Mr. Wayne Gates: This is something that my good friend over here from St. Catharines, Mr. Bradley, and myself have had a lot of discussions on: wait times. It certainly is a concern on a number of things.

Champlain faces longer-than-average wait times for ER care; non-urgent MRIs—and I will address that a little further; cardiac bypass surgery, if you can imagine; and community care. This is one that has got to hit home as well, as somebody who's been involved in trying to make people better your entire life. First Nations youth, in particular, are suffering from the lack of appropriate services.

In my area of Niagara and Mr. Bradley's area of St. Catharines, our wait times for MRIs—the provincial average is 28; we're currently at 114. So we have a problem with wait times at our LHIN as well as at Champlain.

The comment that I have heard from meeting with the professionals at the Niagara Health System, and what you have said, is that some of the concerns are around doctors prescribing MRIs—with no disrespect to any doctors; I'm certainly not a doctor—and they should be looking at something else. You raised that yourself today. That might be something that has to be raised at a different level, on exactly what is the right prescription for the need. Maybe that would help with MRI wait times as well.

It's not just Champlain, and I wanted you to understand that we're taking that issue on. Jim's doing a really good job with highlighting that with his government as well, because 114 days, no matter where you are in the province of Ontario, is way too long, for sure. So I thought I'd say that it's not just yours that is going through that.

Ms. Wendy Nicklin: I think too that we have to be cautious with performance measures, because if any-

thing, they should raise more questions and dig down further. For instance, the cardiac bypass wait-list: If you actually look at the patterns, the bypass wait-list goes up and down like this. At the heart institute in Ottawa, some days you may need to wait for four months and another time you'll wait two weeks. If you're emergent, you're in immediately, and if you're urgent, you're in within days. If you are assessed and can safely wait, you wait. But that waiting pattern goes up and down, so how we look at those performance measures, what's the real message and what steps we take are important, as you know.

Mr. Wayne Gates: As somebody who has already had heart surgery, I understand the importance. I had this discussion a couple of weeks ago about the person that's waiting. I know there are priorities, but the person who is actually waiting—the stress and all the other stuff. So I understand what you're saying. I agree a little bit with it.

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I think you're qualified. I think you're going to be really good for this particular LHIN that has lots and lots of challenges and has had lots and lots of challenges for a number of years. The more qualified people, who want to put patients first, to get on these types of boards—I think it only helps us as we try to fix our health care system, which has lots of challenges as our seniors continue to age.

I thank you for coming here. Thank you for applying. It's a pleasure having a chat with you.

Ms. Wendy Nicklin: Thank you for your time.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Thank you, Mr. Gates.

Our final questions for you are from our government side. You have approximately three minutes: MPP Colle.

Mr. Mike Colle: Again, Ms. Nicklin, thank you very much for offering your services to the people of Ontario. It's refreshing to see someone with your international experience and your professional background still have the willingness to serve and to put your name forward in this position. The one thing that I think makes a province or a country great is that there are people like you who are still willing to get involved and put their names through this. I'm really impressed with your background.

You mentioned that you've been interacting with international organizations. In Ontario, in Canada, we've made this transformation into home care and trying to keep people healthy at home. That hasn't been easy because, as you know, the demands keep growing for more and more hours of care and more quality care.

In other countries, have you heard any feedback in terms of how they are trying to meet these needs in getting people the health care they need in their home setting?

Ms. Wendy Nicklin: Very good question. I'm proud to say Canada is ahead, so even though we ourselves get frustrated at where we are at, we have a lot of positive things we have done to share with other countries as they move forward. Some countries are stronger than others. The UK is doing a reasonable job to do with home care.

Some of the Scandinavian countries have very well-developed approaches to do with home care.

So as we learn and develop strategies, it's getting out there to see what is being done elsewhere. You can find, as you know, other countries the same size as Ontario or smaller to give us some comparators there as well. At the same time, Canada can be proud that some of what we're doing is actually leading-edge.

I'm in Japan, actually, in two weeks, and we're giving a presentation to do with what's going on in Canada with seniors' care and the progress we have made to keep people out of hospital. Because of the challenges that we know are coming with the tsunami of the baby boomers and others, the health care system has got to get really sharp and ensure we've got effective ways to ensure home care is there, the supports are there and so on.

But I do have that opportunity, which is just a wealth of exposure to what goes on elsewhere.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Just 10 seconds left.

Mr. Mike Colle: I was just going to ask about Montfort hospital. As you know, the previous government had closed it. I wonder how it's doing; it's been reopened now.

Ms. Wendy Nicklin: The Montfort—well, it never closed. They fought to keep it open, and they did. It is superlative right now. It has phenomenal support. The quality of what they're providing is top-notch. Bernard Leduc is their CEO. They are a full academic French-speaking hospital with great links, and they do a lot in collaboration with the Ottawa Hospital and with other organizations in the whole region. The Montfort is a shining light.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Thank you very much. That concludes the time allotted for this interview. I would ask you, Wendy Nicklin, if you would step back. We're now going to begin our voting.

Ms. Wendy Nicklin: Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Committee members, we're now going to consider the concurrence for Margaret Reynolds, who is nominated as member to the Landlord and Tenant Board. Would someone please move the concurrence? MPP Bradley.

Mr. James J. Bradley: I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Margaret Reynolds, nominated as member, Landlord and Tenant Board (Social Justice Tribunals Ontario).

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Is there any discussion, members? All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried. Congratulations.

We're now going to consider the concurrence for Wendy Nicklin, who is nominated as member to the Champlain Local Health Integration Network. Would someone please like to move the concurrence? MPP Bradley.

Mr. James J. Bradley: I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Wendy Nicklin, nominated as member, Champlain Local Health Integration Network.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Is there any discussion? MPP Cho.

Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. I'm glad that our NDP MPP, Wayne Gates, focused on this high salary. I was expecting to hear some comments from the applicant. The CEO gets \$314,000, so almost close to half a million dollars—

Mr. Mike Colle: Point of order.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Yes, MPP Colle.

Mr. Mike Colle: Is this in order, considering we're—

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): He's debating the question, so I'll permit it.

You can continue, MPP Cho. You can respond to it, though.

Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Pardon me. I don't know all the procedures. If I'm out of order, you can cut me off anytime. I'm just sharing my concern.

Yet on page 6, the CCAC board—that's the salaries part. The second paragraph says that front-line workers could spend 60 minutes with a patient; now it's cut to 45 minutes. So on the one hand, the top position gets so much money, and yet the patients get less money. Our committee ought to make a specific recommendation and then send it to—the Legislature? I don't know the procedure.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Any discussion on this, members?

Mr. James J. Bradley: I thought that's what Conservatives like.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): MPP Cho, the mandate, the responsibility of this committee, is to look at the competency of the persons coming before us. So that is beyond our mandate, but I thank you very much for making that comment.

We're now going to vote. All in favour of this appointment? Opposed? The motion is carried. Congratulations.

Members, that can be the topic for an agency review, so please keep that in mind.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Our next order of business is that we need to consider a deadline extension for Chris Tambakis. If you turn to this, which was handed out to you, on page 14, two from the top, you will see the name of Chris Tambakis. He is nominated as trustee for the Centennial Centre of Science, and that is the Ontario Science Centre.

Interjection.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): MPP Colle? I would ask that you keep the volume down. We're about to move forward. Thank you.

Interjection.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): MPP Colle—it's all right. He has left the room. MPP Colle has left the building.

The deadline expiry is today for Chris Tambakis. Do we agree to extend by 30 days to November 4, 2016? Do we have agreement? Thank you.

Our final order of business that I need to bring before you is that candidate Douglas Ferguson, who is a part-time member of the Trillium Gift of Life Network, was actually appointed to that position, but should have come before this committee and did not because of an administrative mistake. So he circumvented the process. I'm going to ask the Clerk now to jump in and give us some more explanation and consideration on how to move forward on this.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Sylwia Przewdziecki): Thank you, Chair. The members should have in front of them a memorandum that was sent to my attention from the Public Appointments Secretariat, from the acting director, Mr. Weeres, that explains the steps of what happened. I don't want to put in anything that's outside of this letter, but essentially, Mr. Ferguson was selected for review by this committee. He appeared initially on the June 10 certificate. As per the June 16 subcommittee report, which was adopted on September 27, he is awaiting committee review. As per the details of this letter which you have in front of you, Mr. Ferguson again appeared on a subsequent certificate dated August 26, and on the second iteration it looks like he was not selected, so that subcommittee report resulting from that certificate did not include his name.

What I understand from this letter here is that Mr. Ferguson's new order in council was signed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on September 14 as per the normal PAS appointment process. So on the second page of the letter there is a request: "I am writing today to inquire as to whether it is possible for Mr. Ferguson's review to be withdrawn." So I guess that is the question that is put before the committee for consideration.

I'll just say that in the absence of a committee decision, my office is just following the regular process. So we are going to be in touch with Mr. Ferguson to schedule his review as per the usual process.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): So he should have come before this committee. He got the job and we didn't have the opportunity to speak to him, and now we're considering how to move forward.

Do we have any discussion on this, any suggestions?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: This was brought to my attention this morning before I got here. I understand that Mr. Ferguson is highly qualified for this position, especially with the Trillium Foundation. I would have no objection to leaving things as they are.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Any further discussion?

Mr. James J. Bradley: I think that's a magnanimous gesture on the part of Mr. Pettapiece. It's a logical and practical thing as well, so I thank him for his intervention.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): So, moving forward, we will leave things as they are.

Interjection.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Let me ask you, members: Do you still want him to come before this committee, or are we giving unanimous consent on permission to withdraw the application?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I think he's been appointed already, and I think we should just leave it that way. That's my opinion.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): So, members, do we have unanimous consent to withdraw the application and to leave things as they are? All in agreement? Approved. Thank you.

It was a very interesting morning, wasn't it, members? I want to thank you very much for your work today. We'll see you next time. Adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1003.

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